

There begynneth a merry geste of the frere  
and the boye.

22.



**O**dd that dyed for vs all  
And dranke bothe yfell and gall  
Bynge vs out of bale  
And gyue them good lyfe & longe  
That lysteneth to my songe

O tendeth to my tale  
There dwelled an husbonde in my countre  
That had wyues thre  
By processe of tyme  
By the fyrst wyfe a sone he had  
That was a good sturdy ladde  
And an happy hyne  
His fader loued hym wele  
So dyde his moder neuer a dele  
I tell yon as I thynke  
All the thought was lost by the rode  
That dyde the lytell boye any good  
O thet mete o: dynke.

A.i.

And yet p'pys it was but hadde  
And therof not halfe ynough he had  
But euermore of the worste  
Therfor euyl mote she fare  
For euer she dyde the lytell boye care  
As ferforth as she dorste  
The good wyfe to her husbonde gan saye  
I wolde ye wolde put this boye awaye  
And that ryght soone in haste  
Truly he is a cursed ladde  
I wolde some other man hym had  
That wolde hym better chaste  
Than sayd the good man agayne  
Dame I shall to the sayne  
He is but tender of aage  
He shall abyde with me this yere  
Tyll he be more strongere  
For to wyinne better wage  
We haue a man a stoute ffreke  
That in the felde kepeth our nete  
Sleppynge all the daye  
He shall come home so god me helde  
And the boye shall in to the felde  
To kepe our bestes yf he may  
Than sayd the wyfe herament  
Therto soone I assent  
For that me thynketh moost neddy  
On the morowe whan it was daye  
The lytell boye wente on his waye  
To the felde full redy  
Of no man he had no care  
But sange hey howe awaye the mare

And made Joye p[re]sently  
forth he wente truly to sayne  
Tyll he came to the playne  
His dyner forth he brough  
Whan he sawe it was but had  
full lytell lust thereto he had  
But put it vp agayne  
Therfore he was not to wyte  
He sayd he wolde ete but lyte  
Tyll nyght that he came home  
And as the boye late on a hyl  
An olde man came hym tyll  
Walkynge by the waye  
Sone he sayd god the se  
Syr welcome mote ye be  
The lytell boye gan sape  
The olde man sayd I am an hongred soye  
Hast thou any mete in store  
That thou mayst gyue me  
The chyld sayd to god me saue  
To suche bytyle as I haue  
Welcome shall ye be  
Therof the olde man was gladd  
The boye drewe forth suche as he had  
And sayd do gladly  
The olde man was easy to please  
He ete and made hym well at ease  
And sayd sone gramercy  
Sone thou hast gyuen mete to me  
I shall the gyue thynges thye  
Thou shalt them neuer forgete  
Than sayd the boye as I trowe

It is best that I haue a bothe  
Byrdes for to shote  
I bowe sone I shall the gyue  
That shall last the all thyng  
And euer a lyke mete  
Shote therein whan thou good thyng  
For yf thou shote and wyke  
The prycke thou shalt hytte  
Whan he the bothe in hande sette  
And the boltes vnder his balte  
Lowde than he lough  
He sayd now had I a pype  
Though it were neuer so lyte  
Than were I gladd enough  
A pype sone thou shalt haue also  
In true musyke it shall go  
I do the well to wyte  
All that may the pype here  
Shall not themselves sterye  
But laugh and lepe aboute  
What shall the thyrd be  
For I wyll gyue the gyftes thre  
As I haue sayd to the before  
The lytell boye on hym lough  
And sayd syr I haue ynough  
I wyll desyre no more  
The olde man sayd my trouth I pleghe  
Thou shalt haue that I the byght  
Saye on now and let me se  
Than sayd the boye anone  
I haue a stepdame at home  
She is a wyrewe to me

Whan my fader gyueth me mete  
She wolde theron that I were cheke  
And stareth me in the face  
Whan she loketh on me so  
I wolde she sholde let a rappe go  
That it myght ryng over all the place  
Than sayd the olde man tho  
Whan she loketh on the so  
She shall begyn to blowe  
All that euer it may here  
Shall not themselfe stere  
But laugh on a rowe  
fare well quod the olde man  
God kepe the sayd the chylde than  
I take my leue at the  
God that moost best may  
Kepe the bothe nyght and day  
Gramercy sone sayd he  
Than drewe it towarde the nyght  
Jacke hym hyed home full ryght  
It was his ordynaunce  
He toke his pype and began to blowe  
All his beestes on a rowe  
Aboute hym they daunce  
Thus wente he ppyng through the towne  
His beestes hym folowed by the sowne  
In to his faders close  
He wente and put them by echone  
Homewarde he wente anone  
In to his faders hall he gose  
His fader at his souper sat  
Aytell Jacke espyed well that

And sayd to hym anone  
Fader I haue kepte your nete  
I praye you gyue me some mete  
I am an hongred by saynt I bone  
I haue sytten meteleffe  
All this daye keepyng your beestes  
My dyner feble it was  
His fader toke a capons wyng  
And at the boye began it flyng  
And badde hym ete a pace  
That greued his stepmoders herte soze  
As I tolde you before  
She stared hym in the face  
With that she let go a blaste  
That they in the hall were agaste  
It range ouer all the place  
All they laughed and had good game  
The wyfe wared reed for shame  
She wolde that she had ben gone  
Quod the boye well I mote  
That gonne was well shote  
As it had ben a stone  
Curledy she loked on hym tho  
An other blaste she let go  
She was almoost rente  
Quod the boye wyll ye se  
How my dame leiteth pelletes fle  
In sayth of euer the Gynte  
The boye sayd vnto his dame  
Tempre thy bonbe he sayd for shame  
She was full of sorowe  
Dame sayd the good man go thy waye

for I swere to the by my saye  
Thy gere is not to borowe  
Afterwarde as ye shall here  
To the hous there came a frere  
To lye there all nyght  
The wyfe loued hym as a saynt  
And to hym made her complaynt  
And tolde hym aryght  
We haue a boye within ywys  
A shewe for the nones he is  
He dooth me moche care  
I dare not loke hym upon  
I am ashamed by saynt Iohis  
To tell you how I fare  
I praye you mete the boye to morowe  
Bete hym well and gyue hym sorowe  
And make the boye lame  
Quod the frere I shall hym bete  
Quod the wyfe do not forgete  
He dooth me moche shame  
I trowe the boye be some wytche  
Quod the frere I shall hym teche  
Haue thou no care  
I shall hym teche yf I may  
Quod the wyfe I the praye  
Do hym not spare  
On the morowe the boye arose  
In to the felde soone he gose  
His bestes for to dyue  
The frere ranne out at the gate  
He was aferde lest he came to late  
He ranne fast and blyue

When he came vpon a londe  
A yrell Jacke there he fonde  
Dryupnge his beestes all alone  
Boye he sayd god gyue the shame  
What hast thou done to thy dame  
Tell thou me anone  
But yf thou canst excuse the well  
By my trowth bete I the wyll  
I wyll no lenger abyde  
Quod the boye what eyleth the  
My dame fareth as well as ye  
What nedeth the to chyde  
Quod the boye wyll ye wete  
How I can a byrde mete  
And ocher thyng withall  
Syr he sayd though I be lyte  
Ponder byrde wyll I smyte  
And gyue her the I shall  
Where late a byrde vpon a bier  
Shote on boye quod the frere  
For that me lysteth to se  
He hytte the byrde on the heed  
That she fell downe deed  
No fether myght she flee  
The frere to the busshes wente  
Vp the byrde for to hente  
He thought it best for to done  
Jacke toke his pype and began to blowe  
Than the frere as I trowe  
Began to daunce soone  
As soone as he the pype herde  
Lyke a wood man he fared

He lepte and daunced aboute  
The byeres scratched hym in the face  
And in many an other place  
That the blode brast out  
And tare his clothes by and by  
His cope and his scapelayr  
And all his other wede  
He daunced amonge thornes thynke  
In many places they hyde hym prycke  
That fast gan he blede  
Jacke pyped and laughed amonge  
The frere amonge the thornes was thronge  
He hopped wonders hye  
At the last he helde by his honde  
And sayd I haue daunced to longe  
That I am lyke to dye  
Gentyll Jacke holde thy pype styll  
And my trowth I pleyght the tyll  
I wyll do the no woo  
Jacke sayd in that tyde  
Frere skyppe out on the serder syde  
Lyghtly that thou were goo  
The frere out of the bushe wente  
All to ragged and to rente  
And towe on euery syde  
Unnethes on hym had one cloute  
His bely for to wrape aboute  
His harneys for to hyde  
The byeres had hym scratched so in the face  
And many an other place  
He was all to bledde with blode  
All that myght the frere se

Where sayne alwaye to flee  
They wende he had ben wode  
Whan he came to his boost  
Of his Journey he made no boost  
His clothes were rente all  
Woche sorowe in his herte he had  
And euery man hym bradde  
Whan he came in to the hall  
The wyfe sayd where hast thou bene  
In an euyl place I wene  
He thynketh by thyn araye  
Dame I haue ben with thy sone  
The deuyl of hell hym ouercome  
For no man elles may  
With that came in the good man  
The wyfe sayd to hym than  
Here is a foule araye  
Thy sone that is the lefe and dere  
Hath almoost slayne this holy frere  
Alas and welawaye  
The good man sayd benedicite  
What hath the boye done frere to the  
Tell me without lette  
The frere sayd the deuyl hym spede  
He hath made me daunce maugre my hebe  
Amonge the thornes hey go bette  
The good man sayd to hym tho  
Haddest thou lost thy lyfe so  
It had ben grete synne  
The frere sayd by our lady  
The pype wente so meryly  
That I coude neuer blynnie

Whan it dreyue towarde the nyght  
The boye came home full ryght  
As he was wonte to do  
Whan he came in to the hall  
His fader dyde hym toone call  
And badde hym to come hym to  
Boye he sayd tell me here  
What hast thou done to the frere  
Tell me without lesynge  
Fader he sayd by my saye  
I dyde nought elles as I you saye  
But pypped hym a sprynge  
That sayd his fader wolde I here  
Mary god for hede sayd the frere  
His handes he dyde wyrynge  
Pes sayd the good man by goddes grace  
Than sayd the frere out alas  
And made grete mournynge  
For the loue of god quod the frere  
If ye wyll that he pyppe here  
Bynde me to a post  
For I knowe none other rede  
And I daunce I am but dede  
Well I wote my lyfe is lost  
Stronge ropes they toke in honde  
The frere to the post they bonde  
In the myddle of the hall  
All that at the souper sat  
Laughed and had good game therat  
And sayd the frere wolde not fall  
Than sayd the good man  
Pyppe on good lone

Hardely whan thou mylte.  
Fader he sayd so mote I the  
Haue ye shall ynough of gle  
Tyll ye bydde me be styll  
As soone as Iacke the pyper hent  
All that there were verament  
Began to dalunce and lepe  
Whan they gan the pyper here  
They myght not themselfe stete  
But hurled on an hepe  
The good man was in no dyspayre  
But lyghtly lepte out of his chayre  
With a good chere  
Some lepte ouer the stocke  
Some stombled at the blocke  
And some fell flatte in the tye  
The good man had grete game  
How they daunced all in same  
The wyfe after gan steppe  
Euermore she kest her eye at Iacke  
And fast her tayle began to cracke  
Lowde than they coude speke  
The frete hymselfe was almost lost  
For knockynge his heed agens the post  
He had none oþer grate  
The rope rubbed hy vnder the chynne  
That the blode downe byde ronne  
In many a dyuers place  
Iacke ranne in to the strete  
After hym fast byde they lepe  
Truly they coude not stynie  
They wente out at the doze so thycke

That eche man fell on others necke  
So pretely out they wente  
Neyghbours that were fast by  
Herde the pyper go so meryly  
They ranne in to the gate  
Some lepte ouer the hatche  
They had no tyme to drawe the latches  
They wende they had come to late  
Some laye in theyr bedde  
And helde vp theyr hede  
Anone they were waked  
Some sterte in the waye  
Truly as I you saye  
Starke bely naked  
By that they were gadred aboute  
Thys there was a grete route  
Dauncynge in the strete  
Some were lame and myght not go  
But yet ploys they daunced to  
On handes and on fete  
They boye sayd now wyll I rest  
Quod the good man I holde it best  
With a mery chere  
Seale some whan thou wyte  
In fayth this is the merrest fyte  
That I herde this seven yere  
They daunced all in same  
Some laughed and had good game  
And some had many a fall  
Thou cursed boye quod the frere  
Here I somon the that thou appere  
Before the offycall

3

Loke thou be there on frydaye  
I wyll the mete and I may  
For to ordeyne the sorowe  
The boye sayd by god auome  
Freere I am as redy as thou  
And frydaye were to morowe  
Frydays came as ye may here  
Jackes stepdame and the freere  
Togyder there they mette  
Folke gadered a grete pale  
To here euery mannes case  
The offycrall was sette  
There was moche to do  
Waters more than one or two  
Bothe with preest and clerke  
Some had testaments for to proue  
And sayre women by your leue  
That had strokes in the derke  
Euery man put forth his case  
Than came forth freere Toppas  
And Jackes stepdame also  
Syr offycrall sayd he  
I haue brought a boye to the  
Whiche hath wrought me moche doo  
He is a grete vyrgynancere  
In all orlyuance is not his pece  
As by my trouth I trowe  
He is a wyche quod the wyfe  
Than as I shall tell you by the  
Lowde coude she blome  
Some laughed without fayle  
Some sayd damie temple thy tayle

*By the John 10*

Pe wreste it all amysse  
Dane quod the offycyall  
Tell forth on thy tale  
Lette not for this  
The wyle was afrayed of an other crache  
That no worde more she spache  
She durst not for drede  
The frere sayd so mote I the  
Knaue this is longe of the  
That euill mote thou spede  
The frere sayd syr offycyall  
The boye wyll combe vs all  
But yf ye may hym chaste  
Syr he hath a pype truly  
Wyll make you daunce and lepe on hye  
Tyll your herte breste  
The offycyall sayd so mote I the  
That pype wolde I fayne se  
And knowe what myrth that he can make  
Wary god forbede than sayd the frere  
That he sholde pype here  
Afore that I hens the waye take  
Pype on Jacke sayd the offycyall  
I wyll here now how thou canst playe  
Jacke blew by the sothe to saye  
And made them soone to daunce all  
The offycyall lepte ouer the beske  
And daunced aboute wonder faste  
Tyll bothe his shynnes he all to brest  
Hym thought it was not of the best  
Than cryed he vnto the chyld  
To pype no more within this place

But to holde still for goddes grace  
 And for the loue of mary mylde  
 Than sayd Iacke to them echone  
 If ye wolde me graunte with herte fre  
 That he shall do me no bylany  
 But hens to departe euen as I come  
 Therto they answered all anone  
 And promysed hym anone ryght  
 In his quarell for to fyght  
 And defende hym from his sone  
 Thus they departed in that tyde  
 The offycyall and the sompnere  
 His stepdame and the frere  
 With grete Joye and moche pryde

Thus endeth the frere and þ boye. Enpryn  
 ted at London in fletestrete at the sygne of  
 the sonne by Wynkyn de Worde.



